

plurality of management nodes each management node being connected to a physical node; and wherein said method comprises the steps of:

establishing a first path over said management layer between two management nodes, one of said management nodes being connected to one of said endpoints and the other management node being connected to the other end point; and

(ii) establishing a second path between said endpoints over said physical layer wherein said first path corresponds to said second path;

and wherein said step of establishing the second path is performed as an integral part of said step of establishing the first path.

6. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said steps of establishing a first and a second path comprise establishing a connection between two adjacent management nodes and then establishing a connection between the corresponding two physical nodes.

19. (Amended) A computer program stored on a computer readable medium said computer program being for controlling a communications network comprising at least two endpoints, a management layer and a physical layer, said physical layer comprising said endpoints and a plurality of nodes interconnected by links and said management layer comprising a plurality of management nodes each management node being connected to a physical node; said computer program being arranged to control said communications network such that:

(i) a first path is established over said management layer between two management nodes, one of said management nodes being connected to one of said endpoints and the other management node being connected to the other endpoint;